

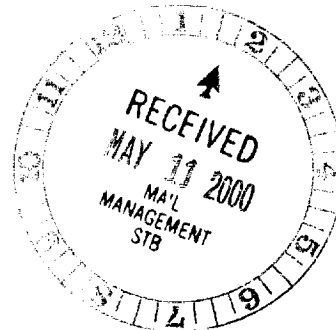
# Oak Harbor Freight Lines, Inc.

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May 8, 2000

The Honorable Linda Morgan  
Chairman  
U.S. Surface Transportation Board  
1925 K Street  
Washington, DC 20412



Re: Section 5a Application No. 61 (Sub-No. 6)  
National Classification Committee Agreement

Dear Chairman Morgan:

My name is Steven M. Hartmann, Chairman of the National Motor Freight Traffic Association, a former chairman of the National Classification Committee. I'm employed by Oak Harbor Freight Lines, Inc. as their Vice-President, Sales & Marketing. Oak Harbor is a Northwest based regional less-than-truckload carrier based in Auburn, WA with annual revenues of \$100,000,000. My educational background is in economics; I have a B.A. in economics from Brigham Young University at Provo, UT. Those who know me well will tell you that I'm a strong proponent of free/open market theory. I am very much pro-deregulation. The exceptions being only those activities which when facilitated collectively (under anti-trust immunity) bring more benefit to the public good than cost.

Over 15 years ago I chose to seek election to the National Classification Committee because I recognized the work of this body provided a tremendous service to the shipping public and to the public in general. I was convinced then, as I still am today, that this was one activity that should and would survive deregulation, as it brings more benefit than costs to the public. Imagine just for a moment a medium size shipper utilizing the services of 20-30 ltl motor carriers. Currently with the National Motor Freight Classification there is one system used by all these carriers to classify (distinguish or group) commodities. Without this single system every carrier would have to come up with some sort of system, this medium sized shipper might have as many classification systems to deal with as they have carriers were it not for the National Motor Freight Classification. It truly does bring tremendous value and cost savings to shippers, truckers and the public in general.

Over my 15 plus years of service on the National Classification Committee I have had the tremendous opportunity of meeting and becoming acquainted with individuals representing trucking companies from every state in the USA. These individuals have been people of integrity, putting their own best interests to the side, and doing their utmost to classify commodities within the established guidelines insuring integrity within the classification. I cannot remember one instance where a proposal was put before us that was within the guidelines and failed, rather every one of them was approved. For whatever reason, from time to time we would get proposals that were not within the guidelines and thus they were failed leaving the proponent frustrated. Once the interested party understood the process, the guidelines and the need for fairness and integrity in the classification they seemed satisfied. However there always seems to be a few who don't want their commodities to be fairly compared against others, but would rather have their commodities rated at unworthy lower ratings, allowing them to reap the economic benefit of an erroneous low classification. These types typically don't believe in fairness and equity, but would rather distort the

facts and resort to any means ethical or unethical that would give them a competitive advantage and support their greed.

Regarding the process as it now stands, I attend practically every National Classification Committee meeting and I attend at least one panel meeting per year. At each of these meetings shippers have been invited to participate. They are our customers and thus every reasonable courtesy is extended to them. For over 15 years I have never witnessed anything but kindness being extended to the shipper participants.

It should also be noted that much of the information provided by associations and shippers that have worked with the classification committee over the years, share this information with the understanding that it will be kept confidential. If individual provider information is not allowed to remain confidential I'm afraid many of the individual shippers will no longer be willing to share their commodity specific information. For the Classification to maintain its value it must have good and accurate commodity data. We have to be able to insure the individual producer/manufacture that their specific information will be kept confidential if we expect them to share it. Aggregate averages and statistics can be made available as they currently are without risk to individual organizations.

Under the current bylaws and process of the National Classification Committee shippers have ample opportunity to participate within the classification process. I don't see currently how any of the recommendations being presented by NIT League and NASSTRAC would improve or move forward the process. By the way, I personally support and exhibit at NIT League and at NASSTRAC functions and if my memory serves me right I'm an associate member of NASSTRAC.

The classification process as it stands today, works well, it provides significant value to the public, and it has served the public for nearly 60+ years. We recognize you and your associates are extremely busy, your decision on this subject will have a profound significance on our industry and the shipping public. Please take sincere interest in this issue and look at the facts and base your decision on them. I'm confident if you do this, you will find as I have found that the classification process as it stands today is one worthy to continue as is.

Sincerely,



Steven M. Hartmann  
Chairman, National Motor Freight Traffic Association  
Vice-President, Sales & Marketing  
Oak Harbor Freight Lines, Inc.